

Method of Delivery

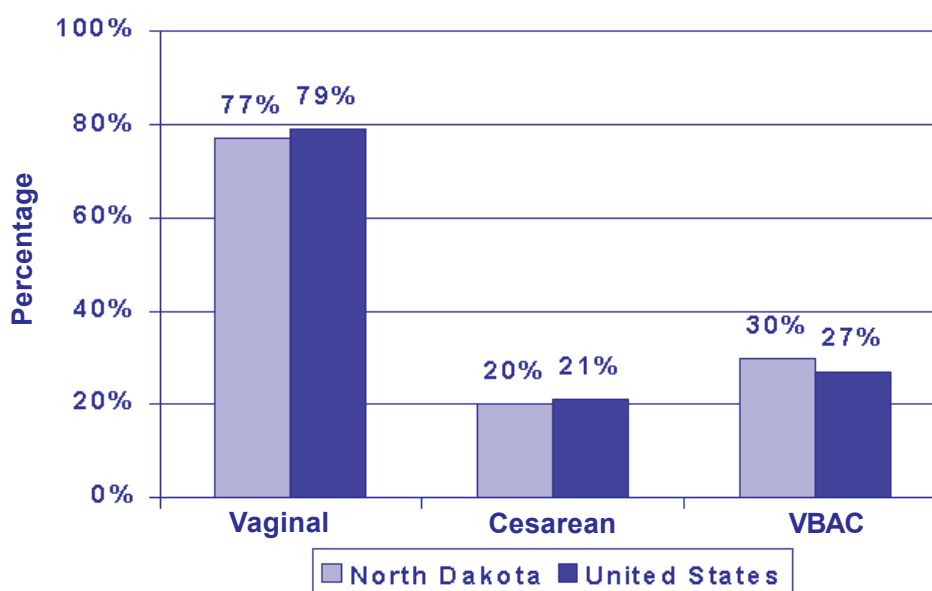
Maternal and Child Health Fact Sheet

The Problem

It has long been believed that a cesarean delivery entails more risk to the mother and infant than a vaginal delivery. Subsequently, lowering the cesarean rate has been a national goal for the past two decades.



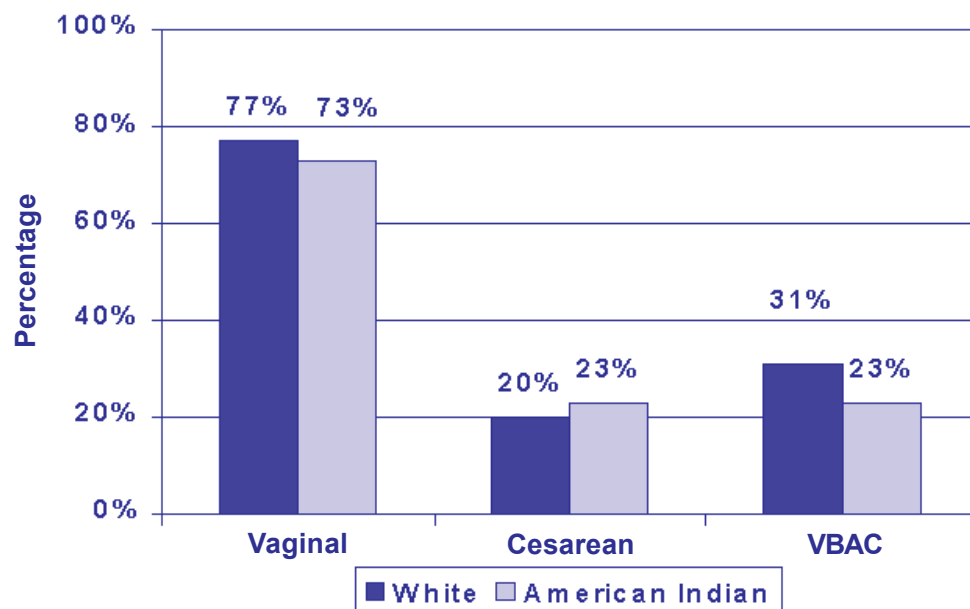
**Method of Delivery by Percentage of Births
North Dakota and United States, 1994 Through 1999**



North Dakota Statistics

- More than three of every four infants are born via vaginal delivery. About one in five babies is delivered by cesarean section.
- Of the vaginal births, about three in 10 come after previous cesarean births, known as vaginal births after cesarean (VBAC).
- Between 1994 and 1999, the North Dakota rates for vaginal, cesarean and VBAC births were similar to the rates for the nation overall.
- American Indian women are more likely to deliver by cesarean than are white women. In addition, the percentage of repeat cesarean deliveries is higher for American Indian women (11 percent) than for white women (7 percent).

Method of Delivery in North Dakota White and American Indian, 1994 Through 2000



The Response

Currently, there is considerable debate in the medical community as to the relative risks and benefits of cesarean and vaginal deliveries. Lowering the cesarean rate, however, still is considered a national goal, one generally supported by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in its most recent comprehensive guidelines.

Data Sources:

- *Trends in Cesarean Birth and Vaginal Birth After Previous Cesarean, 1991-1999*, National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 49, No. 13, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Vital Statistics



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